

NORTH DAKOTA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
QUARTERLY MEETING
PRAIRIE HILLS PLAZA
July 21-22, 2016

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present

Russ Cusack, Tim Davenport, Kirsten Dvorak, Rodney Gillund, Vickay Gross, Joseph Hall (21st), Deborah Jendro, Marshall Longie, Kevin McDonough, Darren Moos, Gillian Plenty Chief, Darcy Severson, Susan Sisk (21st, 1 p.m – 2:30 p.m.), Jason Sutheimer

Members Absent

Joseph Hall (22nd), Julie Magnus, Sherry Shirek, Susan Sisk (21st, 2:30 p.m. to 5; 22nd)

Chairperson Vickay Gross called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

Agenda

Action: A motion was made by Rod Gillund and seconded by Tim Davenport to accept the agenda. Motion carried.

Approval of April 21-22, 2016 Minutes

Action: A motion was made by Rod Gillund and seconded by Darren Moos to accept the SRC quarterly minutes from its last meeting on April 21-22, 2016. Motion carried.

State Plan Update – Robyn Throlson

The first unified state plan, as part of WIOA, has been submitted. DVR's partners are the state workforce agency (ND Job Service) and Adult Basic Education. The VR portion of the plan has been approved. The remaining portions were substantially approved. Revisions are due by September 1, 2016.

Budget Report – Russ Cusack

DVR is on track to spend the federal grant and state match for the year. The federal award was increased by \$300,000 which was not anticipated. It is expected that this additional \$300,000 will be continued as part of the annual grant award. State employee travel is limited and out-of-state travel is limited unless the travel is required as part of the federal grant. CSAVR will be holding regional meetings to discuss the implementation of WIOA and at this time it is unknown if DVR staff or the SRC chair will be able to attend.

The agency is preparing the 2017-2019 budget. The SRC is slightly under budget for the current biennium. Personal care attendant services and interpreters are always included in the budget and the full budgeted amount has not been used.

Tribal Updates

Marshall Longie, Spirit Lake Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Project

The Spirit Lake VR Project is doing well. All five goals are being met and some goals have been surpassed. The goal for number of consumers served was 100 and at this time they have served 130 consumers. Twelve people have been placed in on-the-job training sites and five consumers have been hired. Businesses that have hired include the housing office and a treatment center.

Gillian Plenty Chief, Standing Rock Vocational Rehabilitation Project

The Standing Rock VR Program is doing well. They have met all their goals, including successful closures. They serve 8 districts on the reservation as well as individuals in Bismarck/Mandan.

They have had a significant increase in transition students this year and are trying to manage staff time in order to be able to serve all the students. The transition counselor worked with the students over the summer with a subsistence living program. Students picked items from the prairie, such as sage, turnips, chokecherries, and sold the items. They also helped youth attend cultural events over the summer. The VR program also helps adult individuals attend cultural events.

The staff members are working with the Bismarck VR office to assist consumers in connecting with their new counselors in the Bismarck office as there was a significant amount of turnover in VR counselors.

They continue to have challenges in getting medical records from Sanford Health. Russ Cusack can help all the tribal offices in accessing consumer records from Decision Support Services.

Jamie Hall, Fort Berthold Vocational Rehabilitation Project

The Fort Berthold VR program has moved office location and staff and consumers are enjoying the new space. Consumers are placed in a variety of positions including nursing, security, and self-employment. This is the last year of their five year grant and all their goals have been met. Jamie is confident that they will get funded again, but waiting for the final word.

Next week they are doing a walk/run and cookout to raise awareness of their program. Entertainment has also been planned. They are currently serving around 250 cases but continue to try and connect with new consumers.

Donna Thomas, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Vocational Rehabilitation Project

Donna reports that they are moving into a larger office which will allow them to better serve individuals. She expressed concern that several state VR agencies are considering no longer serving individuals who have a diagnosis of only chemical dependency with no other disability. Russ Cusack states that ND will continue to serve individuals with a diagnosis of chemical dependency. Donna reports their office is

working with a few students who will be going to college in the fall. Russ Cusack referred Donna to IPAT. IPAT has a grant with ND DVR to provide AT assessments for students under the age of 21.

DVR Performance Update – Russ Cusack

DVR follows the federal fiscal calendar which runs from October 1-September 30. DVR is on track to exceed the goals for new applicants and rehabilitation plans written. DVR is on track to meet the goal of successful closures. Vickay Gross reports that ND is either first or second in the nation for employment of individuals with disabilities.

Deborah Jendro asked about services for individuals who are able to work, but are homebound. There are opportunities for individuals to work from their home and all have unique requirements. Each situation would need to be determined on a case-by-case situation, but interested individuals can apply for services.

Veteran's Services – Joseph Hall

Joseph Hall is the State Commander for Disabled American Veterans and in his role he works with veterans who have significant barriers to employment. Veteran's services are funded primarily through federal funding and the services are provided through Job Service North Dakota. The Jobs for Veterans State Grant provides funding for five full-time Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists and a half-time State Veterans Program Administrator. The Veterans Employment Team provides assistance with translation of military skills to civilian terms, case management, job search assistance, labor market research education, career and educational guidance, résumé assistance, and interview preparation. Referrals are made to supportive services to assist veterans in receiving additional services as appropriate. Reemployment workshops are provided as needed. Some issues veterans face include difficulties with translation of transferrable skills, not being prepared for the transition from military to civilian life, missed networking and networking opportunities, their leadership and managerial skills may be difficult to translate to formal education required by the job description, stigma of PTSD or TBI, as well as possibility of deployment. The American's Heroes at Work website (<https://www.dol.gov/vets/ahaw/>) provides information for employers. The unemployment rate in ND for veterans and non-veterans was at 2.8% in June 2016. During this same time period, the national unemployment rate for veterans was 4.2% and for veterans and non-veterans was 4.9%.

Region I Update – Kari Shea, Regional Administrator from Dickinson

Kari reports with the downturn of oil, many of the oil related jobs are no longer available. There are still many service related jobs. Many temporary agencies have left the area. Housing prices are coming down, and there are openings for low income housing. Drug crimes and domestic dispute crimes are up. Within the VR office, the number of applications has increased. Many of the new applicants have diagnoses of autism, drug addiction issues, and mental illness. There will be a transitional house opening soon to assist the women at the correctional facility to transition into community living. Kari has been working closely with the leaders of that program.

The Dickinson office has met or exceed most goals for the year. They have two excellent counselors.

Region V Update – Curt Markell, Regional Administrator from Fargo

The Fargo office has 15 staff members. One counselor recently left VR and took a position with the NDSU Disability Supports office. Curt is expecting increased referrals from the previous counselor. The Fargo office moved into a new building in January. In their new space, they have a room available with computers that clients can use to work on resumes, job search, and to update computer skills. There is also an assessment room where six clients can complete assessments at one time. There are five counselors who work with transition students and they also have two transition contracts that provide Pre-Employment Transition Services to students. There are about 28 students involved in the summer work program.

Fargo is doing well with client service goals and is expecting to achieve or surpass all goals. The average caseload is 47 and they are working to increase caseloads. In March the office participated in a case review and scored a 93% in the 110 program and 92% in the Older Individuals who are Blind program. Curt reports a decrease in referrals from the human service center since the office move.

Fargo's unemployment rate is about 2.2%. Top trades include construction, health services, and government. Some companies who provided supplies to the oil patch have closed recently and as a result, welding positions are difficult to find. Due to budget cuts, two DVR clients have lost their jobs at NDSU. Sanford is scheduled to open their new location in the fall of 2017 and they are concerned about filling the entry-level maintenance and service positions. Wahpeton's unemployment rate is between 2.3% and 2.4%. Manufacturing, education, and healthcare are the strongest industries. The rural locations are experiencing growth in some areas and decline in others.

Ad-hoc Business Awards Committee – Russ Cusack

This committee did not meet. The nominations have been e-mailed to committee members and the members will submit their votes to Patty Wanner. The committee members will present the awards at the Governor's Workforce & HR Conference. The SRC will pay the registration fee for the committee members. No additional members will have their registration paid by the SRC.

Membership/Public Relations Committee – Darcy Severson, Chair

Darcy reports the SRC currently does not meet the requirement of having 51% of the membership being individuals with disabilities. In addition the mandated position for a current or past VR client will be open on November 1. This position will need to be filled and additional members may be added in order to meet the 51% requirement. All committee members will try to recruit members with a wide variety of disabilities. Darcy will also develop a letter to send to DVR counselors so clients can be referred. The committee doesn't believe there is an age requirement and would be interested in having a transition student on the committee. The committee has one applicant right now, but is waiting to process this application until there are three applicants to meet the

Governor's requests. New members would benefit from orientation. The on-line modules that have been available in the past are on hold and will need to be updated with the changes from WIOA. Darcy will put together a new member orientation packet.

The committee continues to move forward with the town hall meeting. They are planning one meeting in Bismarck and will hold off on the Fargo one at this time. The purpose of the meeting will be to give individuals an opportunity to call and ask questions about employment and also allow businesses the opportunity to come and safely and anonymously ask questions about hiring people with disabilities. The committee is hoping to host the event October 18th (first choice) or October 13th but is waiting to hear back regarding the availability of the dates. The event will be one-and-a-half or two hours during the evening. The committee is developing a panel to include ND DVR, VA/VR, Tribal 121 VR, HR, and a person with a disability who has been successful in obtaining employment. Darcy will be the MC for the event. Vickay has a script that was used at the last town hall meeting. P&A has a banner that can be used. The committee is requesting volunteers to take the calls and screen the questions so that appropriate questions will be brought to the panel.

Planning/Evaluation Committee – Kirsten Dvorak, Chair

Market Decisions continues to assist ND DVR with the completion of the satisfaction surveys. The satisfaction rate is 90%. The customer service scores have been lower and additional training will be provided to staff in this area. Market Decisions can drill down on the customer service questions to determine the specific problem areas.

Policies will need to be updated based on changes with Section 511 of WIOA.

Resource Committee –Tim Davenport, Chair

This committee has new members with a background in HR and the committee will review the results of the staff survey.

Section 511 – Cheryl Hess-Anderson

Section 511 is a law implemented under WIOA and is effective July 22, 2016. Employers who hold a 14(c) certificate, allowing them to pay individuals below subminimum wage, will be affected by Section 511. In ND there are 18 employers who hold 14(c) certificates and 911 individuals who are making less than minimum wage. The purpose of Section 511 is to ensure individuals with disabilities have access to services to help them understand all their options within their current positions as well as their options for employment in integrated environments. VR's role is to conduct informational interviews for individuals making subminimum wage. If individuals, or their guardians, do not want to participate in these interviews the reason must be documented. The interviews must be completed twice during the individual's first year working for subminimum wage and then once per year as long as the individual maintains subminimum wage employment. Individuals who are 24 or younger will not be able to enter subminimum wage employment unless they have been provided Pre-Employment Transition Services, have applied for VR services and were determined ineligible or have not completed their Individualized Plan for Employment. VR is working

with HAV-IT Services in Harvey and HIT, Inc. in Mandan as pilot projects and the initial interviews will be completed in these locations. VR is not expecting a significant amount of referrals as a result of the informational interviews.

Darcy Severson shared an update, which included a success story, on the Expanded Supported Employment Program.

Next meeting will be held September 19, 2016, starting at 9 a.m. in the Prairie Rose Rooms at the Prairie Hills Plaza.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.